

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 412

To enhance the operation of the AMBER Alert communications network in order to facilitate the recovery of abducted children, to provide for enhanced notification on highways of alerts and information on such children, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 28, 2003

Mr. FROST (for himself, Ms. DUNN, Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. POMBO, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. HOLT, Mr. BELL, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. MATHESON, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. EDWARDS, Mrs. BONO, Mr. MCINTYRE, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. BISHOP of New York, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. MOORE, Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. HOLDEN, Ms. KAPTUR, Mrs. MALONEY, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. LUCAS of Kentucky, Mr. ROYCE, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. HONDA, Ms. NORTON, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. HILL, Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut, Mr. REYES, Mr. ROSS, Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. POMEROY, Mr. CANNON, Mr. STRICKLAND, Mr. GREEN of Texas, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. FARR, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. KLECZKA, Mr. BAKER, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. WU, Mr. RENZI, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, Mr. NETHERCUTT, Mr. LEWIS of California, Mr. TERRY, Mr. ACEVEDO-VILA, Mr. RAMSTAD, Mr. DAVIS of Alabama, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. SPRATT, Mr. BARTON of Texas, Mr. STENHOLM, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. TANNER, Mr. WYNN, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. CALVERT, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. BACHUS, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. INSLEE, Mr. EMANUEL, Ms. DELAURO, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mrs. JONES of Ohio, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. BACA, Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, Mr. STUPAK, Mr. BURGESS, Mrs. BIGGERT, Mr. HENSARLING, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. HEFLEY, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. COOPER, Mr. KIND, Mr. WOLF, and Mr. MCHUGH) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To enhance the operation of the AMBER Alert communications network in order to facilitate the recovery of abducted children, to provide for enhanced notification on highways of alerts and information on such children, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
 2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “National AMBER
 5 Alert Network Act of 2003”.

6 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL COORDINATION OF AMBER ALERT COM-** 7 **MUNICATIONS NETWORK.**

8 (a) COORDINATION WITHIN DEPARTMENT OF JUS-
 9 TICE.—The Attorney General shall assign an officer of the
 10 Department of Justice to act as the national coordinator
 11 of the AMBER Alert communications network regarding
 12 abducted children. The officer so designated shall be
 13 known as the AMBER Alert Coordinator of the Depart-
 14 ment of Justice.

15 (b) DUTIES.—In acting as the national coordinator
 16 of the AMBER Alert communications network, the Coor-
 17 dinator shall—

18 (1) seek to eliminate gaps in the network, in-
 19 cluding gaps in areas of interstate travel;

1 (2) work with States to encourage the develop-
2 ment of additional elements (known as local
3 AMBER plans) in the network;

4 (3) work with States to ensure appropriate re-
5 gional coordination of various elements of the net-
6 work; and

7 (4) act as the nationwide point of contact for—

8 (A) the development of the network; and

9 (B) regional coordination of alerts on ab-
10 ducted children through the network.

11 (c) CONSULTATION WITH FEDERAL BUREAU OF IN-
12 VESTIGATION.—In carrying out duties under subsection
13 (b), the Coordinator shall notify and consult with the Di-
14 rector of the Federal Bureau of Investigation concerning
15 each child abduction for which an alert is issued through
16 the AMBER Alert communications network.

17 (d) COOPERATION.—The Coordinator shall cooperate
18 with the Secretary of Transportation and the Federal
19 Communications Commission in carrying out activities
20 under this section.

21 **SEC. 3. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR ISSUANCE AND DIS-**
22 **SEMINATION OF ALERTS THROUGH AMBER**
23 **ALERT COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK.**

24 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF MINIMUM STANDARDS.—
25 Subject to subsection (b), the AMBER Alert Coordinator

1 of the Department of Justice shall establish minimum
2 standards for—

3 (1) the issuance of alerts through the AMBER
4 Alert communications network; and

5 (2) the extent of the dissemination of alerts
6 issued through the network.

7 (b) LIMITATIONS.—(1) The minimum standards es-
8 tablished under subsection (a) shall be adoptable on a vol-
9 untary basis only.

10 (2) The minimum standards shall, to the maximum
11 extent practicable (as determined by the Coordinator in
12 consultation with State and local law enforcement agen-
13 cies), provide that the dissemination of an alert through
14 the AMBER Alert communications network be limited to
15 the geographic areas most likely to facilitate the recovery
16 of the abducted child concerned.

17 (3) In carrying out activities under subsection (a),
18 the Coordinator may not interfere with the current system
19 of voluntary coordination between local broadcasters and
20 State and local law enforcement agencies for purposes of
21 the AMBER Alert communications network.

22 (c) COOPERATION.—(1) The Coordinator shall co-
23 operate with the Secretary of Transportation and the Fed-
24 eral Communications Commission in carrying out activi-
25 ties under this section.

1 (2) The Coordinator shall also cooperate with local
2 broadcasters and State and local law enforcement agencies
3 in establishing minimum standards under this section.

4 **SEC. 4. GRANT PROGRAM FOR NOTIFICATION AND COMMU-**
5 **NICATIONS SYSTEMS ALONG HIGHWAYS FOR**
6 **RECOVERY OF ABDUCTED CHILDREN.**

7 (a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Trans-
8 portation shall carry out a program to provide grants to
9 States for the development or enhancement of notification
10 or communications systems along highways for alerts and
11 other information for the recovery of abducted children.

12 (b) ACTIVITIES.—Activities funded by grants under
13 the program under subsection (a) may include—

14 (1) the development or enhancement of elec-
15 tronic message boards along highways and the place-
16 ment of additional signage along highways; and

17 (2) the development or enhancement of other
18 means of disseminating along highways alerts and
19 other information for the recovery of abducted chil-
20 dren.

21 (c) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the cost
22 of any activities funded by a grant under the program
23 under subsection (a) may not exceed 50 percent.

24 (d) DISTRIBUTION OF GRANT AMOUNTS ON GEO-
25 GRAPHIC BASIS.—The Secretary shall, to the maximum

1 extent practicable, ensure the distribution of grants under
2 the program under subsection (a) on an equitable basis
3 throughout the various regions of the United States.

4 (e) ADMINISTRATION.—The Secretary shall prescribe
5 requirements, including application requirements, for
6 grants under the program under subsection (a).

7 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—(1)
8 There is authorized to be appropriated for the Department
9 of Transportation \$20,000,000 for fiscal year 2004 to
10 carry out this section.

11 (2) Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authoriza-
12 tion of appropriations in paragraph (1) shall remain avail-
13 able until expended.

14 **SEC. 5. GRANT PROGRAM FOR SUPPORT OF AMBER ALERT**
15 **COMMUNICATIONS PLANS.**

16 (a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Attorney General
17 shall carry out a program to provide grants to States for
18 the development or enhancement of programs and activi-
19 ties for the support of AMBER Alert communications
20 plans.

21 (b) ACTIVITIES.—Activities funded by grants under
22 the program under subsection (a) may include—

23 (1) the development and implementation of edu-
24 cation and training programs, and associated mate-

1 rials, relating to AMBER Alert communications
2 plans;

3 (2) the development and implementation of law
4 enforcement programs, and associated equipment,
5 relating to AMBER Alert communications plans;
6 and

7 (3) such other activities as the Secretary con-
8 siders appropriate for supporting the AMBER Alert
9 communications program.

10 (c) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the cost
11 of any activities funded by a grant under the program
12 under subsection (a) may not exceed 50 percent.

13 (d) DISTRIBUTION OF GRANT AMOUNTS ON GEO-
14 GRAPHIC BASIS.—The Attorney General shall, to the max-
15 imum extent practicable, ensure the distribution of grants
16 under the program under subsection (a) on an equitable
17 basis throughout the various regions of the United States.

18 (e) ADMINISTRATION.—The Attorney General shall
19 prescribe requirements, including application require-
20 ments, for grants under the program under subsection (a).

21 (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—(1)
22 There is authorized to be appropriated for the Department
23 of Justice \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 2004 to carry out
24 this section.

1 (2) Amounts appropriated pursuant to the authoriza-
2 tion of appropriations in paragraph (1) shall remain avail-
3 able until expended.

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